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## Schools may lose 22,000 educators

Education: Districts across the state look for ways to soften the blow

The state's dismal budget crisis has put the jobs of hundreds of local teachers, assistant principals and counselors in limbo, leaving officials in search of ways to cope with the heavy cuts.

Nearly 22,000 teachers and other certificated staffers across the state received notice they may be let go, including 272 from local schools, officials said Monday, the deadline for announcing possible layoffs.

School districts across California, including some in the Santa Clarita Valley, are also considering asking voters to approve new parcel taxes. Newhall School District board members will see a presentation on the taxes tonight.

State educators gathered in Sacramento to decry the continuing cuts to education as Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proposes cutting another \$2.4 billion from schools on top of an \$18 billion cut in the last two years.

As less money comes in, school districts have responded with increased class sizes, furlough days and fewer support staff positions.

The three local elementary school districts — Sulphur Springs, Newhall and Saugus Union — sent a combined 231 preliminary notices to teachers, counselors and assistant principals as multi-million dollar budget cuts loom. The William S. Hart Union High School District issued 41 notices to employees, including every assistant principal at the district's junior high and high schools.

While the local school districts had been able to take back the layoff notices last year, school officials said they were less hopeful this year.

"School districts will work hard to keep their standards high, but they are continuously asked to do more with less," said Suzan Solomon, Newhall School District board member and vice president of education for the California State PTA in an interview.

Public schools in California employ nearly 307,000 K-12 teachers, according to the state Department of Education.

Solomon was joined by State Superintendent of Instruction Jack O'Connell and leaders from the California Teachers Association and California School Employees Association.

Educators like Solomon worry about how cuts to education, and particularly the continuous increase in class sizes, will impact student education.

"You're undoing the progress that our state has made over the last eight years," Solomon said.

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